

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3585
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 7446

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TAGS: IS
SUBJ: PRESS SPECULATION ON JUNE 12 GOI CABINET DISCUSSION

1. PRESS REACTION TO GOI CABINET DECISION TO DELAY
RESPONDING TO TWO AMERICAN QUESTIONS ON FUTURE OF WEST BANK
AND GAZA FOCUSES ON SPLITS WHICH ARE SAID TO HAVE SURFACED
WITHIN CABINET. PRESS SEES THREE APPROACHES EMERGING
FROM CABINET DEBATE. ONE APPROACH, PROPOSED BY MINISTER
WITHOUT PORTFOLIO -- AND LONGTIME BEGIN LIEUTENANT --
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HAIM LANDAU, ARGUES THAT GOI SHOULD NOT BE DRAWN BY
AMERICAN QUESTIONS BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL AUTONOMY PRO-
POSAL WITH ITS DELIBERATELY VAGUE FIVE-YEAR CLAUSE.
SECOND APPROACH, PROPOSED BY DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN,
FAVORS A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO U.S., ARGUING THAT ISRAEL
MUST SHOW ITSELF READY TO TAKE RISKS FOR PEACE. A
THIRD APPROACH, INTRODUCED BY FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN,

IS SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE A COMPROMISE RESPONSE. DAYAN POSITION CALLS FOR A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO WASHINGTON, BUT ARGUES THAT IN PRACTICE ISRAEL SHOULD AIM TO HAVE AS MANY ELEMENTS AS POSSIBLE OF ITS ORIGINAL AUTONOMY PROPOSAL AGREED UPON NOW AS COMPONENTS OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT. DELAY OF DECISION IS SAID TO BE BECAUSE SEVERAL MINISTERS ARGUED ISSUE WAS CAUSING DEEP SPLITS WITHIN THE CABINET.

2. JERUSALEM POST SEES HARDLINE APPROACH OF LANDAU AS RECOMMENDING IN EFFECT THAT THE CABINET POLITELY REFUSE TO BE COMMITTED NOW TO A SITUATION FIVE YEARS HENCE. POST REPORTS LANDAU AS ARGUING THAT THE AUTONOMY PLAN, TO HAVE A CHANCE OF WORKING, MUST BE ALLOWED TO TAKE EFFECT UPON AREA AND ITS INHABITANTS WITHOUT PRIOR COMMITMENTS THAT WOULD REDUCE IT TO A MERE INTERLUDE.

3. DAVAR AND POST AGREE LANDAU IS EXPRESSING VIEWPOINT OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN. DAVAR'S DANIEL BLOCH REPORTS THAT LANDAU'S PROPOSAL IS SEEN IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES AS SENDING OUT FEELERS BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN A BID TO TEST THE MINISTERS' STATES OF MIND. BEGIN, MEANWHILE, FOR SAKE OF PRESTIGE, IS STAYING OUT OF DEBATE, PREFERRING THAT IT BE WAGED BY LANDAU. SINCE HE HAS NOT YET FORMALLY COMMITTED HIMSELF, BEGIN RETAINS OPTION TO DIS-ASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM HARDLINERS IF HE SEES THAT THEY

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ARE LIKELY TO BE LEFT IN THE MINORITY.

4. DAVAR EDITORIAL NOTES THAT THE NATURE OF WEIZMAN AND DAYAN PROPOSALS INDICATES THAT SOME OF THE CABINET MEMBERS REALIZE THE NEED FOR REVISIONS IN THE GOI'S PEACE PLAN. DAVAR NOTES THAT IT IS NO MERE COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE INTRODUCED THE MORE FLEXIBLE PROPOSALS. IN ADDITION TO BEING MORE PRAGMATIC IN THEIR OUTLOOKS, DAVAR ARGUES, BOTH MEN HEAD MINISTRIES -- FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- WHICH WOULD BE BADLY HIT IF THE DOGMATIC APPROACH GAINED THE UPPER HAND. DAVAR'S BLOCH REPORTS DAYAN AS SAYING THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO STATE THOSE ELEMENTS ISRAEL REGARDS AS VITAL TO A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT: THE RIGHT OF MOVEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE TERRITORIES; THE RIGHT TO BUY LAND AND TO SETTLE ON IT; THE PRESENCE OF THE IDF IN VITAL POINTS; THE QUESTIONS OF (JORDANIAN) CITIZENSHIP AND VOTING RIGHTS FOR THE LOCAL PEOPLE. THE POST REPORTS THAT DAYAN DWELT ON JORDAN'S ROLE IN FUTURE OF WEST BANK AND GAZA, IN LIGHT OF ISRAELI PROPOSAL THAT CITIZENS OF THOSE AREAS BE GIVEN OPTION OF JORDANIAN CITIZENSHIP. POST REPORTS

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HE FAVORED SEVERING LINKS BETWEEN EGYPT AND GAZA
IN FINAL SETTLEMENT, REASONING THAT THE PERMANENT
PARTIES TO SUCH A SETTLEMENT SHOULD ONLY BE THOSE
DIRECTLY INVOLVED: ISRAEL, JORDAN, AND LOCAL REPRESENTA-
TIVES. CONTRADICTING OTHER PRESS REPORTS, MA'ARIV'S
HARIF SAYS THAT WEIZMAN STATED THAT U.S. IS ACTING ON
BEHALF OF SADAT; THEREFORE WEIZMAN ARGUED THERE IS NO
NEED TO ANSWER U.S. RATHER THAN INITIATING A RESUMPTION
OF DIRECT TIES WITH EGYPT.

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5. ACCORDING TO POST, WHICH, UNLIKE MA'ARIV, ASSERTED POSITIVE WIEZMAN POSITION, DEFENSE MINISTER, IS ASSURED THE SUPPORT OF FOUR DMC MINISTERS, AND IT REMAINS UNCLEAR HOW MUCH SUPPORT DAYAN'S IDEAS WOULD ATTRACT AMONG MINISTERS. LANDAU WAS BACKED IN CABINET DISCUSSION BY ENERGY MINISTER YITZHAK MODAI (LIBERAL) AND BY COMMERCE MINISTER YIGAL HURWITZ (LA'AM). ABSORPTION MINISTER DAVID LEVI IS REPORTED TO HOLD SIMILAR TOUGH VIEWS. ALSO UNCLEAR IS WHERE DAYAN WOULD SIDE IN THE EVENT OF A CLOSE FIGHT BETWEEN HARDLINERS AND MODERATES. POST REPORTS THAT MUCH WILL DEPEND ON STANCE OF LIBERAL LEADER AND FINANCE MINISTER SIMCHA EHRLICH, ON HOUSING MINISTER GIDEON PATT (LIBERAL) AND ON THE THREE NRP MEN, NONE OF WHOM HAS YET SPOKEN. THE WEIZMAN CAMP IS APPARENTLY HOPEFUL OF ENLISTING THEIR SUPPORT, THEREBY ENSURING ITSELF OF A MAJORITY -- OR AT LEAST, A VERY RESPECTABLE MINORITY. AL HAMISHMAR REPORTS THAT EHRLICH WILL BE PREPARED TO LINE UP BEHIND THE PRIME MINISTER IF BEGIN PUTS THE QUESTION OF THE REPLY TO THE U.S. IN TERMS OF A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. AL HAMISHMAR CLAIMS ONE MINISTER EXPRESSED VIEW THAT DELAY IN DECISION WAS MADE IN ORDER TO PRESSURE MINISTERS SUCH AS PATT AND ELIEZER SHOSTAK -- WHO SPOKE A WEEK AGO IN FAVOR OF A POSITIVE REPLY TO THE U.S. -- INTO FALLING INTO LINE BEHIND THE PRIME MINISTER. ANOTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATION, ACCORDING TO AH, WAS TO PREVENT EMBARRASSMENT TO BEGIN, WHO IS SEEN AS OPPOSING THE MAJORITY TREND. MOST CABINET MEMBERS ARE SEEN BY AH AS WILLING TO DECLARE GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS FINAL STATUS OF JUDEA, SAMARIA AND GAZA AT THE END OF THE FIVE-YEAR AUTONOMY PERIOD. BEGIN, HOWEVER, LISTENED IMPASSIVELY WHILE DAYAN DETAILED HIS VIEWS, ACCORDING TO MA'ARIV'S HARIF. HIS SILENCE WAS VIEWED AS "HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT" IN SIGNALLING, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A SPLIT BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE PRIME MINISTER.

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6. DAVAR REPORTS THAT DECISION TO DELAY RESPONSE, PROPOSED BY INTERIOR MINISTER BURG, WAS MADE TO GIVE THE PM AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY "TO CRYSTALIZE A UNANIMOUS FORMULA." DAVAR NOTES THAT GOVERNMENT CIRCLES ESTIMATE THAT THE BURG PROPOSAL AVERTED A GOVERNMENT CONFRONTATION AND THAT A DECISION HANDS BY A VOTE. IN AN EDITORIAL DAVAR SPECULATES THAT IF THE PM'S STAND DOES NOT OBTAIN A MAJORITY, THE WAY IS OPENED TO A NEW POLITICAL ALIGNMENT, ALTHOUGH DAVAR CAUTIONS THAT IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO MAKE SUCH FAR REACHING CONCLUSIONS. DAVAR CRITICIZES DAYAN AND WEIZMAN PROPOSALS SINCE THEY CALL FOR CONTINUED ISRAELI CONTROL OF WEST BANK, AT LEAST FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS OF AUTONOMY. DAVAR ARGUES THAT THIS APPROACH HOLDS MORE RISKS AND DANGERS THAN SOLUTIONS. BUT DAVAR TAKES HOPE FROM THE FACT THAT

SOME MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ARE QUESTIONING THE PEACE PLAN AS ONE UNYIELDING WHOLE, IN THE REALIZATION THAT THREAT TO ADHERE TO IT WOULD IRREVOCABLY DOOM THE POLITICAL TALKS AND DEEPEN THE RIFT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

7. HARIF OF THE AFTERNOON MASS CIRCULATION MAARIV (JUST RECEIVED) REPORTS THAT IN A MEETING FOLLOWING THE POLITICAL DISCUSSION IN THE CABINET, A DRAFT PROPOSAL WAS EXAMINED (NOT CLEAR BY WHOM) WHICH CONTAINS A HIGH PROBABILITY OF DRAWING MAJORITY SUPPORT IN THE CABINET. THE NEW FORMULA, WHICH CONTAINS ELEMENTS TAKEN FROM PROPOSALS DISCUSSED BY THE CABINET YESTERDAY, DECLARES ISRAEL WILL BE READY TO DISCUSS A NEW ARRANGEMENT AFTER FIVE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED, INCLUDING THE PERMANENT STATUS OF JUDEA, SAMARIA AND GAZA, AND THIS IN "MUTUAL AGREEMENT." (HARIF'S INFERENCE IS THAT ALL PARTIES MUST AGREE TO FINAL ARRANGEMENT.) IT IS SUGGESTED THAT ISRAEL'S REPLY ALSO STATE THAT, SO LONG AS NO OTHER AGREEMENT EXISTS, THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY WILL CONTINUE. THE KEY PHRASE, HARIF NOTES, IS "MUTUAL AGREEMENT." ALTHOUGH ISRAEL HAS NOT SAID IN THE PAST THAT IT WOULD REFUSE TO DISCUSS ANY PROPOSAL RAISED BY ANY

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SIDE PARTICIPATING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, THIS TIME IT IS REPLYING TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION PUT BY THE AMERICANS AND IS DECLARING THAT IT WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE PERMANENT STATUS - BUT ONLY ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL CONSENT. LEWIS

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